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HNLMS Friesland receives a 21-gun salute in Oranjestad Harbor



Photo depicts the HNLMS Friesland, which arrived yesterday morning for a weekend visit. (See story on pg 3)

US digs out from one winter storm as another looms



CHICAGO (AFP) - The central United States was digging out from a massive winter storm Friday while East Coast residents were preparing for a whopper set to strike over the weekend.

The weakened storm was nonetheless still packing a punch, snarling traffic and cancelling hundreds of flights as it hovered over the Great Lakes region.

A United Airlines plane slid off a runway in Cleveland Friday morning, but officials said nobody was hurt.

The National Weather Service warned that parts of New England could get over a foot (30 centimeters) of snow on Saturday and Sunday, adding to the huge drifts caused by two other storms that struck in the past couple weeks.

The southern end of that system is expected to bring major thunderstorms and possible flooding in Florida.

Meanwhile, ski resorts in the northern Rockies and Cascades were looking forward to a third system expected to dump one to four feet of snow (30 to 120 centimeters) in the mountains.

The first storm began Wednesday, hindering travel

and dumping snow, sleet and freezing rain in 18 states from South Dakota to Pennsylvania in the north and all the way down to Texas to Arkansas in the south.

Kansas was the hardest hit, with nearly two feet of snow (60 centimeters) in some areas, making roads impassable and shutting schools, businesses and government offices.

The governor of Missouri declared a state of emergency after the midwestern state received a dangerous mix of more

than a foot (30 centimeters) of snow in some areas along with freezing rain in others.

Hundreds of accidents were reported from Colorado to Arkansas as blinding snow and freezing rain created treacherous conditions. Only two fatalities were reported -- in Nebraska and Oklahoma -- on Wednesday.

One person was killed when high winds knocked down trees and damaged homes in east Texas Thursday, the National Weather Service said in a storm report.



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Insurance Industry to Benefit from Upcoming Public and Products Liability Insurance Course



The Insurance Association of the Caribbean Inc. (IAC), on February 28, 2013, will be partnering with Liberty International Underwriters to provide training in the area of Public and Products Liability Insurance.

The seminar will examine a spectrum of industries including the hospitality, manufacturing and construction sectors and risks inherent

therein. Participants will be provided with greater insight into how liability can be incurred, essential steps in loss prevention and control and how to best underwrite this class of business.

The course, which will be held at FATUM, a member of the Guardian Holdings Group, will be facilitated jointly by Samuel Paw, Assistant Vice President, Neal

Substantial growth of new businesses during 2012

According to government released statistics, during 2011 there was a growth of 16% in the birth of new businesses compared to 2010. DEHIZI received 446 petitions for new businesses. In 2012 there was an increase of 64% compared to the previous year. A total of 730 petitions for business licenses were received at DEHIZI. This is a substantial amount and a very positive indication demonstrating confidence in our economy and the business climate on Aruba. The focus has been on small and medium size entrepreneurship.

Another interesting development is that petitions for NV's also increased by 65% compared to last year. Also,

62 licenses were given for VBA's compared to 22 during the previous year. This is an indication that businesses are being much better regulated and structured.

The DEHIZI has done exceptionally well in processing many more petitions during the same year and ensuring that they keep up with all requests. In 2012, 1541 permits were issued compared to the previous year which was only 1002 permits.

In the past, clients had to wait various months to receive their businesses license, these licenses are now being issued within 4 weeks.

The department also noted a shift in the type of businesses being developed. For

Magnus, Vice President Primary, Casualty Claims and Chris Diebold, Underwriting Officer, Casualty.

The seminar aims to enable participants to:

- Better understand the scope of cover of this class of business
- Better able to identify inherent industry risks
- Better able to handle claims
- Better able to assess and control various trade hazards
- Better able to service the company's clientele by finding the right solutions to their problem

Participants will receive certificates as a testimony to their participation.

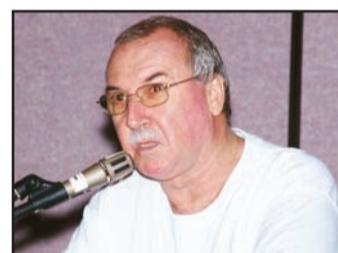
You can register at Fatum by calling Mrs. Madel Jacopucci at 582-1111 or by sending an email to Jacopucci.madel@fatum.com.

the first time they registered "Management Consultancy" businesses. This is exactly the direction they want to see the economy go...towards "knowledge economy."

Whenever there is positive activity and confidence in the commercial sector, jobs are created. This has been confirmed by the figures from SVB which indicate an increase of 3.6% in the amount of new employees registered with SVB during the last quarter of 2012.

Small and medium size businesses remain the backbone of our economy. And, the government remains committed to supporting our businesses in every possible manner.

AHATA strongly denies hotels are intimidating workers



James Hepple

The CEO of AHATA Mr James Hepple, on Thursday denied in the strongest terms the recent statement made by Mr. Diego De Cuba of STA that the "Hotels are intimidating their workers". Mr. Hepple said that this was just another example of Mr. De Cuba's misinformation spread to incite more labor disharmony which will inevitably lead to the disruption of Aruba's tourism industry, the main pillar of Aruba's economy.

Mr. Hepple deplored the fact that Mr. De Cuba was so irresponsible as to accuse two hotels of intimidation when all that had happened was that in one particular hotel two associates had broken in-house rules and had been verbally disciplined by management. No one was

suspended nor was suspension ever considered.

Mr. Hepple then said it was ridiculous that Mr. De Cuba called for laws to protect associates affiliated with a union when there were more than adequate laws already in place to do so.

"If the associates feel they have a legitimate case of intimidation then let them file a court case and see what happens. There are laws in place to allow them to do so" said Mr. Hepple.

Mr. Hepple concluded "It is really unfortunate that the STA has chosen to use this inflammatory approach to negotiating labour contracts. The hotels are perfectly willing to work within the existing processes as laid down by law. The hotels and AHATA are not anti-union. It is sad that Mr. De Cuba wants to create this climate of conflict based on innuendo and misrepresentation. This can only lead to enormous disruption of the hotel sector and the tourism industry of Aruba, the main source of income for virtually all Arubans."

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HNLMS Friesland receives a 21-gun salute in Oranjestad Harbor



Governor Refunjol and Martijn Boelen of the Cabinet of Ministers greet the ship

Honor brigades of the Royal Dutch Marines stationed on Aruba gave a traditional welcome to one of the four new Holland class vessels being deployed around the world to combat piracy and smug-

voyage of the flagship, the HNLMS Holland.

Its sister ship, HNLMS Friesland, will be stationed in the area for the next four months, operating principally out of Curacao. The vessels

stationed at the headland of Governor's Beach, across from the traditional residence of Aruba's governor. It returned the ship's 21-gun salute when it entered Oranjestad Harbor at 8:30 AM. The ship then did a quick tour of the coastline to again pass by the beach where Governor Fredis Refunjol, accompanied by Mr. Martijn Boelen and Savaneta Marine Camp Commandant Lt. Colonel Edwin Hofma, received a salute from the ship.

The other ships in this specialized fleet are the HNLMS Zeeland and Groningen, one of which will likely replace the HNLMS Friesland after its four-month tour of duty in the region. The ships, aside



A 21 gun salute

gling, the HNLMS Friesland, which arrived yesterday morning for a weekend visit.

In October of last year, Vice Admiral Matthieu Borsboom stopped in Aruba during an introduction of the specially designed vessels to Joint Interagency Task Force, (JIATF) headquartered in Key West, with the maiden

are outfitted with state of the art equipment for detecting very small vessel presence, the type most commonly used for illegal activities, and has Fast Raiding Interception and Special Forces Craft (FRISC) and an NH-90, a medium weight helicopter for pursuit.

An honor brigade led by Lt. Simon Gunneweg was

from their primary task of combating drug smuggling, human trafficking, weapons smuggling and piracy, will also provide aid for search and rescue and disaster assistance during major storms. It will patrol not only the ABC islands, but also the other Dutch islands of St. Maarten, St. Eustatius and Saba.

By Rosalie Klein

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Government's focus on pensioners and cost of living

In December Aruba had a registered amount of 17,141 citizens collecting the Government's Old Age Pension (AOV). These persons either receive only the AOV or also collect an additional pension. In order for one to receive the complete AOV, the person must have lived and worked on Aruba for at least 40 years. A widowed person or pensioner living alone who lived and worked here their entire life, has the legal right to receive a pension of Afls.1057 per month, whereas a couple will receive Afls.1780 per month.

The government is aware of the fact that the cost of living is a major issue for our seniors. They are committed to alleviating the situation especially for those most vulnerable, such as those on well fare, with minimum wages and those living on pension.

Specifically in the case of pensioners, the government has decided to introduce the so called "Reparatiestoelag," an "Assistance Stipend" of Afls.50 in order to give pensioners a bit more spending money.

Continued on pg 5

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Julien Collot's Traveling Bear

Share a journey with a very special traveling companion for Clown Doctors Aruba

Peter Balliere, founder of Clown Doctors Aruba, welcomed island media to Taste of Belgium to officially announce the foundation's 2013 fundraising campaign, Julien Collot's Traveling Bear. Clown Doctors is an organization dedicated to visiting and entertaining hospitalized children, to relieve their boredom and fears from what is often a very terrifying experience.

This year, the foundation offers a most unique and interesting campaign to not only raise funds for their work, but also bring awareness for children with cancer, and hopefully donations to advance research for a cure. The focus of interest is an adorable blue bear, garbed in an official Aruba logo tee



Disease at the age of eight. This was an unfortunate, but not uncommon, catastrophic condition brought on by the two bone marrow transplants he needed.

Julien's mother, Jacqueline

rounded by friends who were enchanted by the exceptionally bright and precocious youngster.

These friends shared Jackie's pain over the years, and when he died. Jacqueline and Thierry Collot have kindly consented to loan the Clown Doctors foundation Julien's favorite plush blue bear for this new campaign to raise funds and awareness

Julian's Bear has already enjoyed a trip from Holland with some major European celebrities, which are posted on the Facebook Page: Julien Collot Traveling Bear. Jodi Tobman, founder of Salamander Holdings of Aruba, has already committed to a trip with the bear, destination undecided. He will soon depart for Paris, which will be documented on their FB page. Maduro Travel Agencies has also agreed to encourage its clients to take the bear with them when booking an excursion. He comes with his own special travel bag.

Funds are raised by travelers agreeing to donate a designated amount for each



Rona Coster, Peter Balliere, Mario Arends, Esmeralda with Clown Puruchi

shirt, and travelers from Aruba are encouraged to invite this bear to be their companion during trips over the next year.

Rona Coster explained the origins of this very special bear. He was a favorite of a young man named Julien Collot, who battled Adult ADL Leukemia for more than half his life, triumphing over the cancer, but succumbing to Graft V. Hosts

line, had moved to Aruba from the U.S., becoming an "Americana/Arubiana," with her heart always in the island. She had a strong network of friends and her relationship with her adopted homeland remained even after she married and returned to the States to live and raise a family. Her friends on Aruba shared her joy at the birth of her son, and Julien spent a great deal of his young life on Aruba, sur-

juliensbear@gmail.com. or via their website.

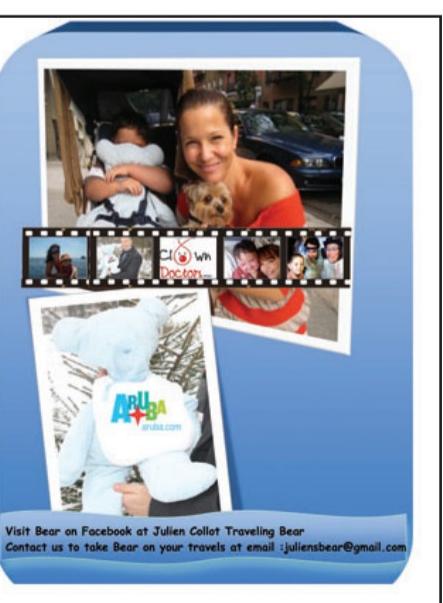
This is also where to send pictures and stories of his trips. Interested parties are welcome to contact Peter personally at peter_balliere@hotmail.com.

Mario Arends of the Aruba Tourism Authority was on hand to express the staunch support of the island's tourism entity for the poignant campaign. A link to the FB page will also be placed on the official Aruba.com tourism website to encourage participation.

The campaign's FB page has a very brief, inspiring video of Julien made when he was just six, with the belief that "I am a survivor," before complications took his life. It is a touching homage and recommended viewing.

Organizers of the fundraising effort encourage island travelers to contact them and have his little blue "Ambassador of Hope" join them on their journey.

By Rosalie Klein



**Government's focus
on pensioners and
cost of living**

Continued from pg 3

This Assistance Stipend is especially for those collecting a maximum of Afsl.1.057 per month.

Persons who lived on Aruba and then left and lived in another part of the Dutch Kingdom territory, are required to submit the so called "Attestatie de Vita" periodically to prove that they are alive in that country and are eligible for continuing to receive the monthly pension. This group of persons may also make use of the opportunity offered by SVB to register in order to receive the Assistance Stipend.

There are 8 registration points around the island. The pensioner must simply fill in a simple form and submit this to SVB before March 15th. In the month of April the pensioner will receive his regular pension payment along with Afsl.200 more to correspond to the first four months of the year (Afsl.50 per month). The following month he will receive the Afsl.50 extra and then consecutively thereafter. It is estimated that some 10 to 11 thousand pensioners will have rights to receive this Assistance Stipend.

Pensioners who submit the form after March 15, but before April 1st, will receive their Assistance Stipend of January to May together with their pension payment in May 2013. Any pensioner who fails to apply before April 1st, will not receive any Assistance Stipend for Fls.50 per month for the rest of this year. All registered pensioners, registered with SVB as of December 2012 have received a letter at home along with the registration form.

The following places are designated for receiving the forms: as of February 24th, from 12 noon to 8:00pm: Oranjestad - Centro di Bario Playa Pabao; Dakota - Centro di Bario Dakota; San Nicolaas - Santa Teresita Center; Noord - Centro di Bario Noord; Tanki Leendert - Centro di Bario Tanki Leendert; Savaneta - Centro di Bario Savaneta; Centro di Bario Piedra Plat; Piedra Plat y Paradera; y Santa Cruz - Club Estrella. Next week, from Monday, February 25 to Sunday, March 15, the centers will be open from 4:00 in the afternoon to 8:00 in the evening.

The government takes pleasure in affording pensioners some improvement in their benefits for their many years of contributing to the development of our island.

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RBC Royal Bank (Aruba) N.V. honor their employees



Recently, RBC Royal Bank (Aruba) N.V. held a jubilee for six employees who together celebrated 75 service years at the bank. RBC Royal Bank congratulates: Mr. Giancarlo Arends, Mrs. Elizabeth Baarh, Mr. Randall Angela, Mrs. Jessica Klepper, Mr. Romulo Martis and Mr. Angelo Figaroa, in celebration of their 12 years and a half years. Photo depict the honorees together with managers of their respective departments.

With Chavez sick, heir apparent Maduro raises his profile

CARACAS (AFP) - The growing presence of Vice President Nicolas Maduro on state-run television, normally focused on ailing President Hugo Chavez, is giving analysts a sense that a transition is afoot in Venezuela.

With Chavez bed-ridden since December due to cancer surgery, Maduro has attended international summits, led military parades and inaugurated public works shown in countless broadcasts.

In recent days, official television featured old footage of Maduro taking part in Bolivarian revolution events as a young man, the type of biographical coverage usually reserved for Chavez.

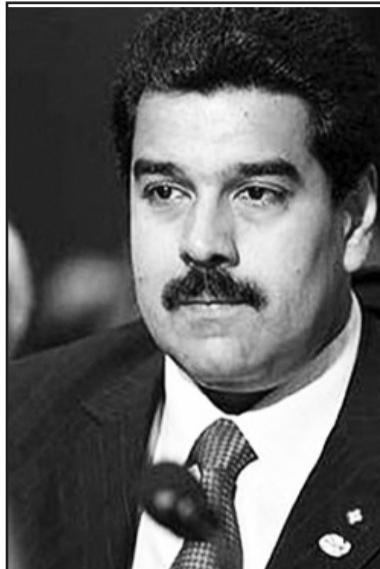
Meanwhile, the voice of the once omnipresent and garrulous Chavez has not been heard since he went to Cuba in December to undergo his fourth round of cancer surgery in 18 months.

The only images of Chavez were shown last week, showing him in bed but smiling, flanked by his two daughters. And then he tweeted on Monday to announce his surprise return to Caracas after two months of treatment in Cuba.

He is now convalescing in a heavily-guarded military hospital here but the latest medical report on Thursday had a pessimistic tone.

After 14 years of Chavez in power, the report either seeks to "raise the emotional connection" between Chavez and his loyal followers "or prepare them little by little for bad news," Luis Vicente Leon, analyst at the firm Datanalisis, told AFP.

The medical report read by the information minister said that Chavez was still suffering from respiratory prob-



Nicolas Maduro

lems and that the evolution "has not been favorable." He has been fitted with a tracheal tube to help him breathe.

The government is "opening more the path towards a political change," historian Margarita Lopez Maya told AFP.

The transition, she said, began on December 8 when Chavez stunned his nation by announcing that he was returning to Cuba for more surgery and appointed Maduro his political heir in case he was unable to return to power.

If Chavez is forced to give up the presidency, elections would have to be held within 30 days, and Maduro would be his ruling socialist party's candidate.

Maduro's presence in official media increased after Chavez was unable to attend his inauguration on January 10, three months after he was re-elected to a new six-year term, Lopez Maya said.

"The government needs a sense of command, cohesion and unity. The strategy is to win support in the Chavista

base," she said.

"That is why he has this presence in the media and he maintains a radical message against some media and the opposition," the historian added.

Although Maduro lacks the charisma and public aura that Chavez is known for, he has adopted some of his mentor's hardline rhetoric.

Maduro is a one-time bus driver who became a union leader and rose to the rank of foreign minister under Chavez. He was named vice president after the leftist leader's re-election in October.

Historic week looms for Vatican with papal resignation

VATICAN CITY (AFP) - Pope Benedict XVI's final Sunday prayers in St Peter's Square will signal the start of a week in the Vatican that will make history with the first voluntary papal resignation in more than 700 years.

Tens of thousands of pilgrims have gathered in Rome from around the world following the ageing pope's shock announcement that he would step down because he no longer had the strength of body and mind to govern the Catholic Church in modern times.

Crowds are expected to turn out in the Vatican on Sunday and again on Wednesday when the leader of the world's 1.2 billion Catholics will bid a final farewell to ordinary Catholics at a general audience in the Vatican's 17th-century plaza.

On Thursday, the pope will meet his cardinals in the morning and take a helicopter to the papal summer residence of Castel Gandolfo in the afternoon.

At 1900 GMT that same day, Benedict will become only the second pope in the Church's 2,000-year history to resign of his own free will.

Speculation has been rife in recent days over what might have triggered the pope's decision, with the Panorama weekly and the Repubblica daily saying it was linked to an explosive report with allegations of blackmail against gay Vatican clergymen.

Other recent reports say the resignation was due to the pope's health condition, which they say may be more serious than the Vatican has revealed.



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Uncertainty as Italian election campaign wraps up

ROME (AFP) - Italy held its final day of campaigning on Friday ahead of crucial elections, as international investors warned an unclear outcome could shake the economy and set off shockwaves throughout Europe.

Italians will cast their ballots on Sunday and Monday as they grapple with the longest recession in two decades and austerity cuts that have caused deep resentment in the eurozone's third economy.

The most likely outcome is a centre-left government led by Democratic Party leader Pier Luigi Bersani, a

former communist with a down-to-earth manner who now espouses broadly pro-market economic views.

But the result is by no means certain and whether Bersani can form a stable coalition with a majority in both houses of parliament is in serious doubt, putting the financial markets on edge.

Outgoing premier Mario Monti wrapped up his campaign in Florence, accusing the left of being "a prisoner in its ideological straitjacket" and condemning ex-premier Silvio Berlusconi's "vulgarity" against women.

US, Japan vow 'strong action' on N. Korea: Obama



said the two leaders spoke about "our concerns about the provocative actions that have been taken by North Korea and our determination to take strong actions in response."

Abe, who is known for his hard line on North Korea, said that he agreed with Obama on the need to press for a new UN Security Council resolution condemning Pyongyang.

"We just cannot tolerate the actions of North Korea such as launching missiles and conducting a nuclear test," said Abe, sitting next to Obama in the White House's Oval Office.

"We agreed that we would cooperate with each other in dealing resolutely with North Korea," he said.

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International News

Guatemala checking if Mexico drug lord killed



GUATEMALA CITY (AFP) - Guatemalan authorities said late Thursday they had no proof that a clash between traffickers that was rumored to have killed Mexican drug cartel kingpin Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman had actually taken place.

Earlier officials said they were investigating whether Guzman, Mexico's most wanted man, had been killed in a shootout in a jungle area of the Peten department.

But Interior Minister Mauricio Lopez told AFP that "we are ending the night patrol because we have not found any evidence that tells us that there was a confrontation."

Calling the possible death Guzman a "chaotic rumor generated by all sides," he said security forces were poised to survey the area, located near Mexico's border, by air.

Earlier Lopez cautioned that although authorities could not be "100 percent" certain, "the first information we have is that it could be him."

Confusing the situation further is that even state-run Guatemalan news agency, Agencia Guatemalteca de Noticias, said that security forces preliminarily reported the death of two people and the discovery of vehicles and weapons in the hamlet of San Valentin, about 500 kilometers north of Guatemala City.

Belgium in shock over police brutality video

BRUSSELS (AFP) - Footage of a young man in psychological distress who asked for police protection but later died after being brutally battered by a crack six-man police unit caused shockwaves across Belgium.

The disturbing scenes of police brutality that took place in early 2010 in the suburbs of the port city of Antwerp were aired on the VRT Dutch-speaking tel-

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evision network in a documentary late Thursday.

Jonathan Jacob (26), whose last hours were reported in a long documentary on the television channel, died in the cell January 6, 2010, after the incident.

A body-building fanatic with a love of horses, according to his father, Jacob used amphetamines and on the night of his encounter with police appeared to be suf-

ferring from withdrawal.

After asking a police patrol for help, he was taken to a psychiatric clinic but once there refused to be locked up and threatened the officers with his fists.

Fearing violence, the clinic refused to take him in so the officers drove the young man -- who by then had stripped naked -- to a police-station where he was locked in a tiny cell about

3.5 metres square.

A video camera in the police station shows six helmeted police, armed with shields and batons, creeping quietly towards the cell door before hurling a stun grenade inside. All six then pinned him down on the bed as he curled up in terror to shelter.

One of the officers then landed several punches before a

doctor gave him an injection to sedate him.

But they realised he was no longer moving and efforts to revive him failed.

In February, the Belgian judiciary ruled the head of the clinic and a psychiatrist who refused to take him in should be tried along with the officer responsible for the fatal blows.

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Health & Living

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--One the best things you can do to improve your health and fitness is to increase your daily activity level. This doesn't mean you have to spend hours at the gym or run a marathon each day.

Simply adding little activities throughout your day can have a positive effect on your health. Here are five simple exercises you can easily incorporate into your routine *and at home*.

1. Alternate lunges

*Standing straight, step forward with one leg until the back heel comes off the ground. Then lower yourself by bending at the knees, pause down the bottom and then step back and up to your starting position.

*Repeat for the other leg.

*Increase intensity by doing multiple repetitions on one leg before switching.

*You can add this into your routine when vacuuming by lunging every step instead of just walking.

2. Wall or counter push-ups

*Find a wall or counter top in the house.

*Stand an arm's length from the wall/counter and place hands on wall/counter shoulder width apart and lean so your weight is on your arms.

*Keeping the body straight

*Keep your elbows in or do the exercise on the floor to increase intensity.

*You might want to do 10 of these during ad breaks of your favourite shows.

3. Step-ups

*Using a stool (braced against something stable, such as a wall) or set of stairs, step onto the stool or second step with one leg at a time then step down.

*Repeat, changing legs. Use the top leg to bring your whole body up.

*Do 20 step-ups at a time.

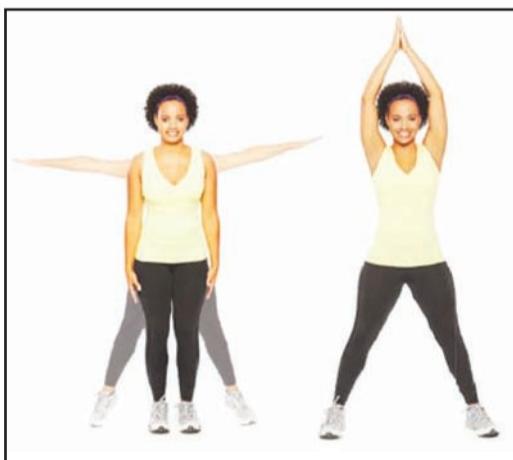
*Speed up steps to increase intensity.

4. Bridge/plank

*Find a flat even surface. Lying face down, support yourself on your elbows and forearms and knees and toes. Elbows should be directly underneath shoulders and knees and feet, hip-width apart.

*From there straighten out your body so your spine is parallel to the ground.

*Activate your core by sucking your belly button in then come up to your toes.



*Return to your starting position.

*Repeat as many times as desired.

*Try doing it during a whole ad break or every time you stand up from chair.

*As always, please check with your health provider or go before engaging in any new fitness regime.



JAMMU (AFP) - Indian yoga participants perform exercises during the inaugural session of World Yoga Conference in Jammu on February 21, 2013. The three-day World Yoga Conference on the theme 'Global Peace and Harmony through Holistic Approach of Yoga and Meditation' will host over 300 delegates from different countries.

F.D.A. Approves Breast Cancer Drug Kadcyla

WASHINGTON - The Food and Drug Administration announced that it had approved Kadcyla (ado-trastuzumab emtansine) as a new therapy for patients with HER2-positive, late-stage (metastatic) breast cancer. An advantage of Kadcyla is that it is less harmful to normal cells; however, major side-effects can occur.

The drug Kadcyla from Roche combines the established drug Herceptin with a powerful chemotherapy drug and a third chemical linking the medicines together. The chemical keeps the cocktail intact until it binds to a cancer cell, delivering a potent dose of anti-tumor poison.

Cancer researchers say the drug is an important step forward because it delivers more medication while reducing the unpleasant side effects of chemotherapy.

The drug's label will carry a boxed warning, the most serious possible, of the drug's potential to cause liver and heart damage or even death.



The drug can also cause life-threatening birth defects.

In clinical trials, patients who took the drug, known during its development process as T-DM1, survived an average of 30.9 months, compared with 25.1 months in a control group.

"Kadcyla delivers the drug to the cancer site to shrink the tumor, slow disease progression and prolong survival," said Dr Richard Pazdur, director of the FDA's office of hematology and oncology products. "It is the fourth approved drug that targets the HER2 protein."



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Sci-Tech

Google challenges Apple with high-end laptop

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) - Google unveiled a touch-screen notebook computer designed for high-end users, throwing down the gauntlet to Apple and its MacBooks.

Google said its Chromebook Pixel computers blending tablet and laptop technology, boasting heavyweight Intel chips and screens tailored for rich graphics, were released in the United States and Britain, starting at \$1,299.

A Pixel model featuring built-in connectivity to the Verizon mobile Internet service will hit the US market in April at a price of \$1,449.

The newly unveiled version can connect online with wireless hot-spot technology or cables.

Google is hoping enthusiasts will forego price comparisons with competitors such as MacBooks or laptops built on Windows 8 software and focus instead on the Pixel's touchscreen feature and the massive terabyte of Google Drive online data storage included.

While the Pixel seems aimed at the MacBook market, it also faces fierce competition from touchscreen laptops based on Windows 8 software.

Analyst Rob Enderle of Enderle Group branded the Pixel move "a train wreck," arguing that notebook computers above \$600 have historically not sold well and that Apple even sells a slick MacBook Air model for \$999.

The booming popularity of tablet computers is also eroding the overall market for laptops.

The announcement adds a new dimension to the rivalry between the two tech giants, locked in a fierce battle over smartphones and tablets.

Google custom built Pixel and is producing it with the help of electronics manufacturers in Taiwan.

Shifting operating software to banks of servers online means that Google updates programs and fends off hackers and malicious software.

Supersonic skydiver's records confirmed

LAUSANNE (AFP) - Austrian skydiver Felix Baumgartner broke three world records when he jumped from the edge of space in October, the World Air Sports Federation confirmed on Friday.

The Swiss-based federation, also known as the FAI, said Baumgartner notched up

the world's maximum vertical speed record, as well as the highest exit altitude and vertical distance of freefall.

The FAI confirmed a final analysis by Baumgartner's team Red Bull Stratos, which said that the 43-year-old reached 1,357.6 kilometres (843.6 miles) an hour, or Mach

1.25, in freefall.

Baumgartner's jump took place last October 14 in Roswell in the US state of New Mexico.

Wearing a specially-designed survival suit, he launched himself to Earth, freefalling 36,402.6 metres before opening his parachute.

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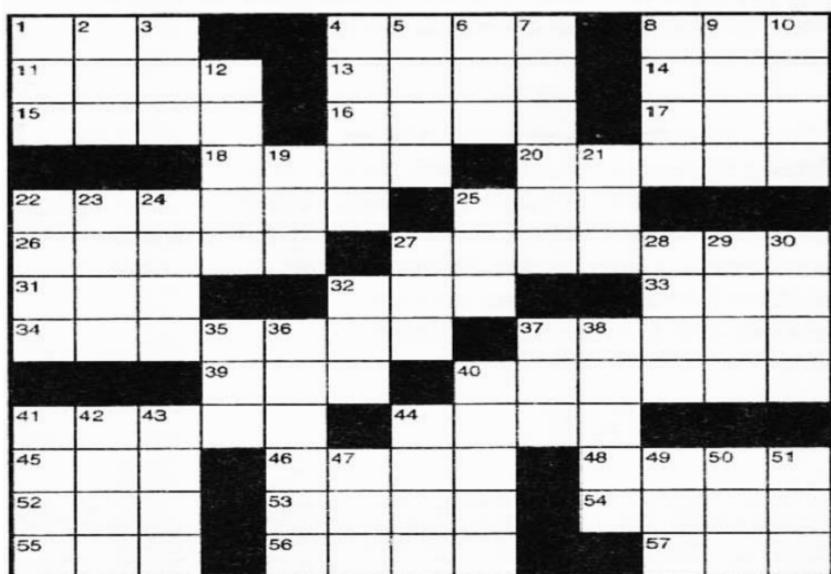


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ROSS

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Close friend | 31. ____ player
(VCR's
successor) |
| 4. Catcher's
glove | 8. "____, humbug!" |
| 11. Eden man | 32. Time units
(abbr.) |
| 13. Pearl Harbor's
island | 33. It follows Mon.
34. "____ on My
Mind" |
| 14. Apply | 37. Reject |
| 15. Post-it
message | 39. Passing grade |
| 16. ____ about
(approxi-
mately, 2
wds.) | 40. "...the skies
____ cloudy all
day" (2 wds.) |
| 17. None
whatsoever | 41. Large couch
44. Wharton grads
45. French article |



- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|----|----|----|----|----|
| 18. Actor Beatty
and others | 46. The Kingston
— | 6. Conjunction,
informally | | | | | |
| 20. Brazilian port | 48. Take-out
phrase (2
wds.) | 7. Edible root | | | | | |
| 22. Cruel persons | 52. Middle (abbr.) | 8. Pitcher's hit,
often | | | | | |
| 25. Used a match | 53. Tear | 9. Continent
across the
Pacific | | | | | |
| 26. Solitary sort | 54. Page for
viewpoints
(hyph.) | 10. Hades | | | | | |
| 27. Voted "nay" | 55. Tot distracter | 12. __ Carlo | | | | | |
| 31. __ player
(VCR's
successor) | 56. Ox collar | 19. Always, in
verse | | | | | |
| 32. Time units
(abbr.) | 57. Actor Danson | 21. From __ Z (2
wds.) | | | | | |
| 33. It follows Mon. | DOWN | 22. Apartment
house, e.g.
(abbr.) | | | | | |
| 34. " __ on My
Mind" | 1. Tennis's
Shriver | 23. Roam | | | | | |
| 37. Reject | 2. Picnic drink | 24. Destroy | | | | | |
| 39. Passing grade | 3. Thrash | 25. "Vinyl" (abbr.) | | | | | |
| 40. "...the skies
__ cloudy all
day" (2 wds.) | 4. Frames of
mind | 27. "...man __
mouse?" (2
wds.) | | | | | |
| 41. Large couch | 5. Anderson and
Richardson | 28. Daze
momentarily | | | | | |
| 44. Wharton grads | | 29. 21st-century
currency | | | | | |
| 45. French article | | 30. Little hollow | | | | | |
| | | 32. Scurry | | | | | |
| | | 35. Panasonic
rival | | | | | |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 13 | | | | | 14 | | |
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| 19 | | | | 20 | 21 | | |
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| 36 | | | | 37 | 38 | | |
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| 46 | 47 | | | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 |
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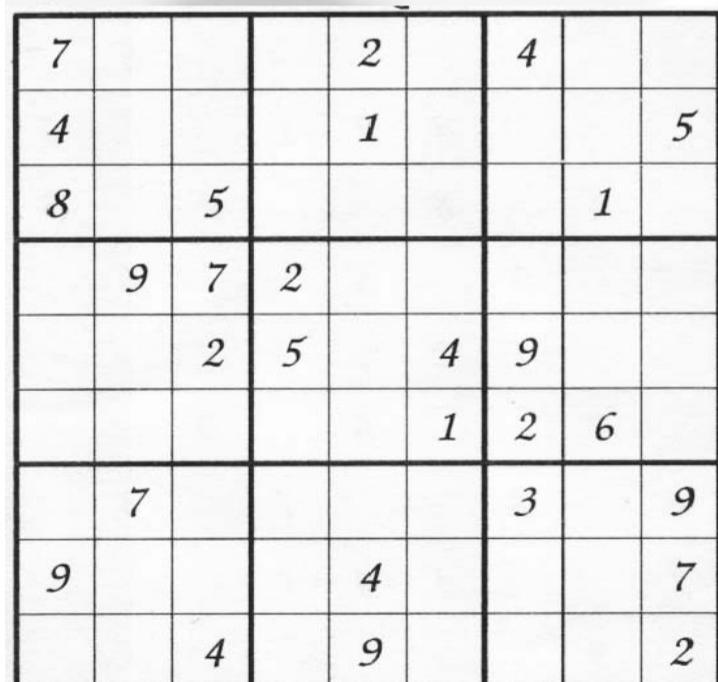
SOLUTION



Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9

A number is Never repeated in a row or column.

In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



SOLUTION

2	1	8	7	6	9	4	5	3
7	5	2	4	3	8	1	6	9
6	4	9	5	3	2	7	8	1
9	7	1	6	8	3	4	2	5
1	3	8	2	5	7	9	6	4
5	6	4	1	2	7	3	8	9
8	9	7	5	3	4	2	6	1
3	4	2	1	6	5	9	7	8
7	1	6	9	8	3	4	5	2

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9

A number is Never repeated in a row or column.

In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9



Current as of:
02/22/2013

	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	98.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.76
Britain	GBP	2.80	2.85	2.77
Switzerland	CHF	191.71	192.43	192.73
Netherlands	EUR	230.59	232.69	237.21
Sweden	SEK	25.91	26.63	28.31
Denmark	DKK	30.23	30.95	32.04
Norway	NOK	30.67	31.39	32.01
Japan	JPY	214.88	216.84	192.88

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France is euro 'problem child', frets Merkel party official



BERLIN (AFP) - A leading member of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's conservatives said Friday that France was a "problem child" in the euro-zone and must scrap its 35-hour work week as well as push back its retirement age.

"The French must save to become more capable of acting. They must of course also make economic reforms," Michael Fuchs, deputy chairman of the Christian Democrats' parliamentary group told public radio.

"They must change the working hours. You know that the French still have the 35-hour week. That can't work when in Switzerland people work 42 hours, in Germany 40 hours," he complained on Deutschlandfunk radio.

He was speaking before the European Commission announced that France's public deficit was set to be worse than expected in 2013 and 2014, veering up to 3.7 percent of output this year and 3.9 percent next year.

The EU sets a ceiling of 3.0 percent of output.

France's wages and work ethic have been under the international spotlight this week after the head of US tyremaker Titan, Maurice Taylor, mocked French workers for putting in only "three hours" a day, prompting a sharp retort from Paris.

Fuchs also criticised France on its pensions policy. "It's simply necessary for people to work longer. You cannot retire at 60, that doesn't work any more. The French must consider that," he added.

"Unfortunately France is a problem child in the euro, since other countries have done their homework substantially more intensively. Spain, also Italy under (outgoing Premier Mario) Monti...," he said.

"The whole eurozone must be internationally competitive. And there, the French are far behind."

Asked to comment on France's public deficit, Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert said it was not for the German government to assess but that states must do their homework to win back confidence in Europe.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer



Finance

EU slaps anti-dumping duty on mandarins from China

BRUSSELS (AFP) - European Union imports of tinned mandarin products from China were hit by a special anti-dumping duty on Friday to protect producers in Europe with high production costs.

The decision to re-impose a duty on prepared or preserved mandarin products such as tangerines, satsumas and clementines was agreed Tuesday by EU ministers. The duty will vary from 361.4 euros a tonne to 531.2 euros and will remain in force until the end of the year.

The main EU producer, Copa-Cogeca, welcomed the move while regretting it was not applied retroactively to the start of the season, in November-December 2012.

"These imports do not have to respect the same costly rules and obligations and food safety standards as those applied in the EU – there are huge production and labour cost differentials," said its secretary-general Pekka Pesonen.

He said in a statement that production costs in the EU reach 11-12 euros a kilo (FOB) while comparable Chinese production costs total 6.30 euros.

"We are now already towards the end of February and this regulation was agreed quite late in the season," he added. "If these measures are not introduced with a retroactive effect from the start of the 2012/3 marketing year, the regulation will have much less impact."

US allows business with four Myanmar banks
WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States authorized US entities to do business with four major Myanmar banks Friday, extending the easing of economic sanctions on the former pariah state.

The Treasury Department said it had issued a general license to allow individuals, companies, and financial institutions to conduct most financial transactions -- such as opening and maintaining an account and a range of other financial services -- with the banks.

The banks named were Myanma Economic Bank, Myanma Investment and Commercial Bank, Asia Green Development Bank, and Ayeyarwady Bank.



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HTC settles US charges of security flaws on devices

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Taiwan-based electronics maker HTC settled charges with US regulators that it failed to provide adequate security for smartphones and tablet computers sold to Americans, officials said Friday.

The Federal Trade Commission said HTC agreed "to develop and release software patches to fix vulnerabilities found in millions of HTC devices."

No financial penalty against the company was announced.

The FTC said it investigated allegations that HTC "failed to take reasonable steps to secure the software it developed for its smartphones and tablet computers, introducing security flaws that placed sensitive information about millions of consumers at risk."

The settlement requires HTC America "to establish a comprehensive security program designed to address security risks during the development of HTC devices and to undergo independent

security assessments every other year for the next 20 years," the statement said.

An FTC complaint filed at the same time as the settlement said HTC, which makes devices using both Microsoft Windows and the Google Android operating systems, made modifications to software which sacrificed security.

In some instances, the complaint said, HTC "undermined the Android operating system's permission-based security model."

The flaws could allow hackers to introduce malware which could "surreptitiously record phone conversations or other sensitive audio, to surreptitiously track a user's physical location, and to perpetrate 'toll fraud,'" a practice of sending text messages in order to collect fees, the FTC said.

The FTC said that malware could also be used to steal financial account numbers or medical information stored on the devices.



TEHRAN (AFP) - An Iranian man buys eggs at a supermarket in downtown Tehran on February 22, 2013. Negotiators from Iran, the United States, Britain, China, France, Germany and Russia will hold their first nuclear talks in eight months in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on February 26, as four rounds of UN sanctions against Iran and unilateral sanctions ordered by the United States and European nations continue to damage the Iranian economy.

Nominees in main Oscars categories

HOLLYWOOD (AFP) - Here is a list of the nominees in the main categories for this year's Oscars. The winners will be announced at the 85th Academy Awards show Sunday, in the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood.

- **Best picture:** "Amour," "Argo," "Beasts of the Southern Wild," "Django Unchained," "Les Misérables," "Life of Pi," "Lincoln," "Silver



Linings Playbook," "Zero Dark Thirty."

- **Best director:** Michael Haneke for "Amour," Benh Zeitlin for "Beasts of the Southern Wild," Ang Lee for "Life of Pi," Steven Spielberg for "Lincoln," and David O. Russell for "Silver Linings Playbook."

- **Best leading actor:** Bradley Cooper for "Silver Linings Playbook," Daniel Day-Lewis for "Lincoln," Hugh Jackman for "Les Misérables," Joaquin Phoenix for "The Master," and Denzel Washington for "Flight."

- **Best supporting actress:** Jessica Chastain for "Zero Dark Thirty," Jennifer Lawrence for "Silver Linings Playbook," Emmanuelle Riva for "Amour," Quvenzhane Wallis for "Beasts of the Southern Wild," and Naomi Watts for

"The Impossible."

- **Best supporting actor:** Alan Arkin for "Argo," Robert De Niro for "Silver Linings Playbook," Philip Seymour Hoffman for "The Master," Tommy Lee Jones for "Lincoln," and Christoph Waltz for "Django Unchained."

- **Best foreign language film:** "Amour" (Austria), "Kon-Tiki" (Norway), "No" (Chile), "A Royal Affair" (Denmark) and "War Witch" (Canada).

- **Best animated feature:** "Brave," "Frankenweenie," "ParaNorman," "The Pirates! Band of Misfits" and "Wreck-It Ralph."

Oscar-nominee 'Five Broken Cameras' sparks identity debate



JERUSALEM (AFP) - "Five Broken Cameras" the Oscar-nominated documentary about Palestinian popular resistance in the occupied West Bank, has found itself at the centre of an unusual debate -- over its identity.

Co-directed by Palestinian Emad Burnat and Israeli Guy Davidi, the film documents the story of Bil'in village and the struggle of its residents to protect their land from Jewish settlers and Israel's giant separation barrier.

But while the story is Palestinian throughout, the film was made with funding from the

Jewish state.

The story follows the villagers' weekly demonstrations against the seizure of their land through the eyes of Burnat's family.

When the Oscar nominations were announced in January, two local films got the nod, which some immediately pounced upon as a runaway Israeli success.

One was "The Gatekeepers," which offers a glimpse into the secret world of Israel's Shin Bet domestic security agency through the eyes of six of its former chiefs.

The other was "Five Bro-

ken Cameras."

"Two Israeli films are among the five nominated for best documentary for the Academy Awards," Israel's embassy in the United States said on its Twitter feed immediately after the nominations were announced.

It was a narrative quickly echoed by some of the Israeli press.

For Burnat, it was a "cunning attempt" to damage the film.

"The Israeli press tried to describe the film as Israeli which was strange to me because it is about me, my family and my village," he told AFP. "It cannot be an Israeli movie because it is about an attempt to erase Palestine."

The film, which also received French funding, tracks the life of Burnat and his family since the birth of their son Jibril in 2005, the same year Israel began building its sprawling separation barrier on lands owned by the village.

The title comes from the five cameras that were broken as Burnat captured the villagers' plight on film over the years.

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ments are completely furnished with cable TV. The open kitchen is very spacious and equipped with stove top, refrigerator, toaster/oven and coffee maker (microwave optional). The apartments are air-conditioned, with daily maid service, private parking and a mini market.

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Eat like a local at The Queen's restaurant at Palm Beach Plaza



Keshi Yena with plaintains, vegetables and pica

An elegant décor with a breezy terrace overlooking Palm Beach welcomes guests to Varella Innocencia's very popular restaurant showcasing authentic local cuisine:

The Queen's.

They may have moved from Oranjestad to hipper new digs in Palm Beach Plaza, but the food and prices are strictly native, which is what first won this charming eatery their loyal clientele.

Varella's mom, Luisa, is still in the kitchen, conjuring up the delicious dishes that have been in her family for generations, acknowledged on the menu with items such as "Carni Stoba di Mamachi"- "Grandma's Beef Stew," and their Arawak Steak, along with local delicacies like Keshi Yena -"Full Cheese." This is a tasty, filling stew of chicken, with other ingredients that are handy that day,

all incased in a thick skin of melted Gouda. It was very satisfying and particularly memorable paired with The Queen's garlic bread and very special Pica, a mix of chopped onions and the famous local hot pepper, Madame Janette. Not overly spicy, it lends that perfect bit of tang to this deliciously picturesque meal.

One of the distinctions of Aruban cuisine is incorporating unique indigenous ingredients such as in Wild Cucumber Stew and a particular light fish chowder accompanied by the local specialties pan bati (corn meal pancake) and funchi (the local version of polenta.)

Seafood main courses of Catch of the Day Aruban Style to shrimp and a mixed seafood platter with shrimp, fish, squid, scallops and mussels. Meat dishes such as BBQ Chicken and Ribs or Grilled Tenderloin, each in-



Varella, Luisa and the next generation of chef

cluding a choice of 2 side dishes; all quite yummy and bargain-priced to boot!

The Queen's is located on the second level of Palm Beach Plaza, tucked into a cozy corner at the front of the mall. If you have a mind to try the real deal in Aruban food, without a doubt, this is the way to truly eat like a

local. They are open from 11:00 AM to 11:00 PM, daily, offering indoor and outdoor dining.

Aside from an extensive menu they also have daily specials made from whatever is in season and Mama Luisa is in the mood to prepare, so don't forget to ask about what isn't on the menu!

La Linda Department Store- where Aruba shops!



Calman and Anna Hochman

Though Aruba has its share of designer brand stores and shopping malls, ask almost any islander where they shop, and they will likely tell you "La Linda." Spread out over several specialty stores on the Caya Betico Croes, La Linda was Aruba's first and foremost department stores, where, for decades, one could find anything and everything, and after more than 70 years, still can make that claim.

It is also a distinctly family operation, with the personal touch and supervision of the Hochmans, who take their reputation for stocking "the best quality for the best price" very seriously. It all

started with Calman Hochman, a Jewish Polish immigrant who opened his first small shop with his Aruban wife Anna, carrying "a little bit of everything that anyone could need." This was before WWII, when the present head of the company, Jaime, hadn't even been born yet. Many of their sales help have also been with the store for over two decades, and "it is very much like family here," he admits. Their loyal patrons also look forward to being helped by shop girls who have become friends, knowing they will get great and honest service.

To this day, La Linda is

particularly known for its huge fabrics and notions department, the first destination for many on an island where making your own clothes is still an everyday practice. Without question, the store offers the greatest diversity of selection in nearly every department, and they have now consolidated them all into one store; four floors containing a wealth of choices in clothing for men, women and children, house wares, bedding, sporting goods, luggage, shoes, jewelry, decorative items and more.

"The present store is a work in progress," asserts Jaime, as they continue to



Unique, quality goods in all departments



Comfortable lounges for companions while shopping a vast selection

renovate and enlarge what had been only the men's store and warehouse in the past. Normally closed for a 2 hour lunch/siesta in the old island way, shoppers will soon find it open daily for the entire day, from 9:30 AM to 6:30 PM, as they are on Saturday's, with a bright, charming eatery installed on the top floor.

La Linda is continually expanding their inventory, with their acquisitions department continually seeking out interesting, unique, and moderately priced goods from all over the world, always with an eye towards quality.

They pay particular attention to their Women's Department specializing in over-sized garments, stocking larger sizes exhibiting distinctive dash and style.

For travelers who have perhaps lost their luggage, they can offer a quick fix for all the family which won't break your budget, including some very stylish new suitcases.

A visit to La Linda and perusal of their interesting collection will make anyone understand why it has remained successful all these decades, and is still Aruba's favorite place to shop!

Sport

Boxing: Bundrage hopes for hometown edge in title defence



DETROIT (AFP) - Ishe Smith heads into hostile territory on Saturday when he challenges Cornelius Bundrage for the International Boxing Federation light middleweight belt in the champion's hometown.

But Smith, promoted by unbeaten welterweight Floyd Mayweather, says fight fans in Detroit won't be able to help Bundrage when they step between the ropes.

"This isn't football. This isn't basketball. You can't yell at the quarterback so he can't have his cadence. You can't wave stuff in the crowd so you can't shoot free throws," Smith said. "You've got to get in there and you've got to fight, and I've got to fight."

"It's two warriors going at it. And one thing about it -- he's going to get touched."

Smith has vowed to become the first fighter from the boxing haven of Las Vegas to win a world title.

After battling through personal and professional travails that once had him contemplating suicide, Smith (24-5, 11 knockouts) said this week that if he didn't walk out of Detroit with the crown, he'd rather not walk out.

"I'd rather go out on my back," he said, "than go home



without that title."

Bundrage, who boasts a record of 32-4 with 19 knockouts and still has plenty of punching power at the age of 39, is equally determined not to disappoint his hometown fans as he fights in Detroit for the first time since 2005.

Cycling: Armstrong cites US Postal success in legal fight

WASHINGTON (AFP) - Lance Armstrong's legal team released studies on Friday conducted by the US Postal Service saying the US government sponsorship of his Tour de France team produced a triple return on investment.

The documents were made public as the US government joined a lawsuit that claims Armstrong -- who admitted to doping after being stripped of seven Tour de France cycling titles -- defrauded former sponsor US Postal Service.

The lawsuit had been filed by Floyd Landis -- a former Armstrong teammate who was stripped of the 2006 Tour de France crown for doping to which he admitted -- alleging Armstrong defrauded US taxpayers by claiming he was winning Tour de France titles without taking performance-enhancing substances.

Armstrong attorney Robert Luskin said in a statement that talks with federal lawyers collapsed over how to measure damages, with Armstrong's side saying the Postal Service reaped huge benefits from its cycling sponsor deal.

To support the claim, Armstrong's camp released sponsorship evaluations from 2001, 2002 and 2004 that attempted to place a monetary value on the exposure benefits to US



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Postal at that time.

The studies claimed that for \$32.276 million spent by US Postal from 2001-2004, there was \$103.636 million in publicity benefits with never less than a 300 percent return in investment in any year of the sponsorship.

There was no study to show any potential fallout in negative publicity from being attached to Armstrong's now-tainted era in the wake of his confession to being a dope cheat in a television interview with Oprah Winfrey last month.

Links to the greatest doping scandal in cycling history could have provided damaging publicity and a more-recent negative payback for US Postal, already forced to stop Saturday delivery later this year because of financial woes.

FCB Sports Marketing's evaluation of US Postal's 2001 benefits said that \$6.138 million in sponsorship investment brought US Postal \$18.539 million in exposure and global publicity could boost the value as high as \$40 million.

The studies used equivalent costs of advertising time on television coverage of the Tour or print advertising in newspapers or on websites where mentions of US Postal or photos with its logo were shown.

Ski jumping: Takanashi second at Nordic worlds



PREDAZZO (AFP) - Japanese favourite Sara Takanashi, the World Cup champion, had to settle for the silver medal in the women's ski jumping final at the Nordic world championships on Friday.

The 16-year-old scored 251 points but was beaten into second spot by American rival Sarah Hendrickson who won gold with 253.7 points.

Austria's Jacqueline Seifriedsberger claimed the bronze on 237.2 points.

"Sarah is my favorite jumper. I admire her jumps, I look at the way she jumps during the competition and they were remarkable," said Takanashi.

"The World Cup and World Championships are a different competition, all I can do is do my best, I came here to

Predazzo to do my best and I did."

Hendrickson praised her Japanese rival who had dominated the World Cup season and put her success on Friday down to familiarity with the conditions in Italy.

"I had two wins here last year (in the World Cup), I broke the hill record twice, it helps me a lot," said the American.



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NBA: Heat humble Bulls to stretch win streak

CHICAGO (AFP) - LeBron James scored 26 points and notched 12 rebounds Thursday to lead the Miami Heat to an emphatic 86-67 NBA victory over the Chicago Bulls that stretched their winning streak to nine games.

James's seven assists left him three shy of a triple-double, and Dwyane Wade added 17 points for a Heat team that shot 51 percent from the field against one of the league's top defenses.

Miami held Chicago to their lowest points total this season.

The Bulls were again without point guard Kirk Hinrich, who had missed seven games before returning in Tuesday's

victory over the Hornets.

The pain in his right elbow flared up and sidelined him again, leaving Nate Robinson to start.

Robinson had a team-high 14 points, while Carlos Boozer added 12 points and 11 rebounds.

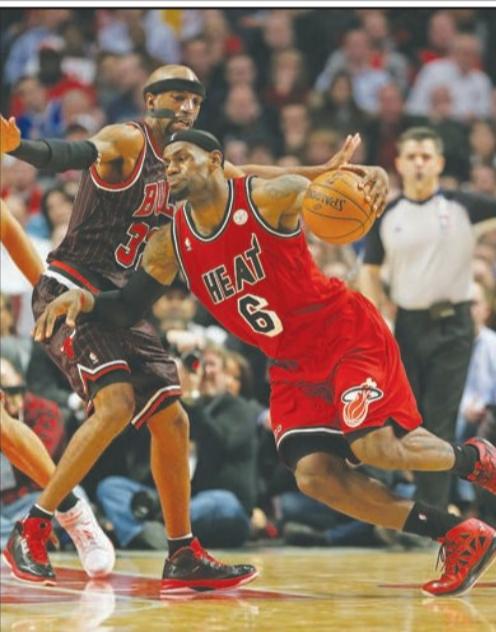
The Bulls' 17 first-half turnovers were more than their season average of 14.7 coming into the contest.

They lost the ball five times in a definitive 13-0 Heat run in the second quarter that saw Miami take a 39-28 lead. The Heat led by at least seven points for the rest of the game.

After Wade's layup gave Miami a 70-56 lead early in the fourth, Bulls head coach

Tom Thibodeau sat All-Stars Joakim Noah and Luol Deng.

France's Noah finished with 11 points, eight rebounds and eight assists while Britain's Deng scored six points on 3-of-12 shooting.

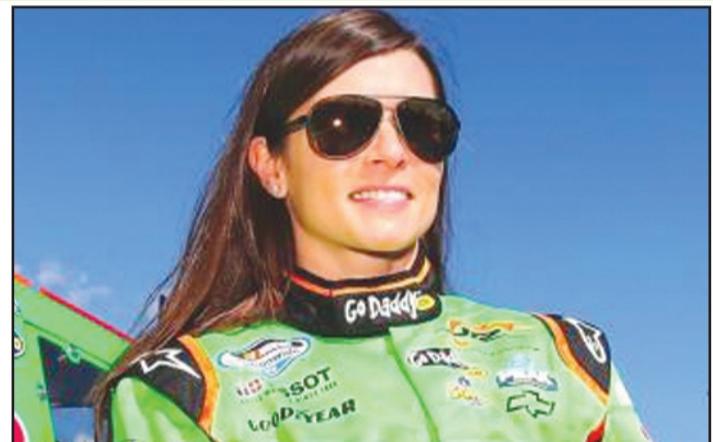


LeBron James #6 of the Miami Heat drives against Richard Hamilton #32 of the Chicago Bulls



BOGOTA (AFP) : Argentine tennis player Paula Ormaechea celebrates after defeating Maria Torro of Spain during their WTA Bogota Open match, in the Colombian capital - Paula Ormaechea (ARG) beat Maria Teresa Torro (ESP) 6-1, 7-5. Other games (Quarter-final) Jelena Jankovic (SRB x1) bt Alexandra Cadantu (ROM) 6-2, 6-1. Karin Knapp (ITA) bt Lara Arruabarrena (ESP) 6-3, 6-3. Teliana Pereira (BRA) bt Mandy Minella (LUX) 6-1, 6-2

Daytona 500 schedule 2013



Danica Patrick has made racing history, becoming the first woman in the history of NASCAR to win the pole for any race.

The Daytona 500 schedule for 2013 brings NASCAR racing back to fans of the sport this coming Sunday, Feb. 24. The televised race will feature history with the first-ever female race car driver, Danica Patrick, having already won pole position in the Daytona 500 starting lineup.

The Daytona 500 live race start time is scheduled for 1 p.m. EST on Sunday. Forty-three drivers from NASCAR's Sprint Cup make up the starting grid with Patrick the pole winner. Meanwhile, Jeff Gordon of Hendrick Motorsports is the outside pole winner. A report on Feb. 21 from ESPN.com indicates that Kyle Busch and Kevin Harvick won the Daytona Duels to secure strong positions in the starting grid. Busch said of the upcoming race's increased number of cars on the track at Daytona International Speedway:

Rounding at the first five on the grid will be Greg Biffle, Kasey Kahne, driving for Chevrolet will be at the #6 spot, with Juan Pablo Montoya at #7, Austin Dillon at #8, Jimmie Johnson at #9 and Clint Bowyer at #10. As far as race car drivers with local ties,

Roanoke NASCAR fans will notice that Jeff Burton of South Boston, VA is at #18, while Denny Hamlin, who lived in Chesterfield, VA, is down at #35 in the starting grid.

In terms of favorites to win, odds currently favor Matt Kenseth, Tony Stewart and Jimmie Johnson to win the Daytona 500 in 2013. Danica Patrick has odds of 30 to 1, as does Burton, while Hamlin has 12 to 1 odds to become 2013 Daytona 500 winner.

The Daytona 500 start time for 2013 is 1 p.m. EST on Sunday, Feb. 24. Fans will be able to follow along with the leader boards on ESPN.com and NASCAR.com during the race, but there is no live streaming online feed available to watch the race.

Daytona 500s have been running since 1959. They have been won by Richard Petty and his dad, by Dale Earnhardt, Jr. and his dad, by Davey Allison and his dad, by the brothers Waltrip, by a 50-year-old, by a 20-year-old and by a whole lot of fine gents down South.

Just ain't never been won by no woman.

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Pistorius freed on bail pending murder trial



PRETORIA (AFP) - South African Paralympic icon Oscar Pistorius was freed on bail on Friday, pending a high-profile trial for killing his girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp.

Pretoria magistrate Desmond Nair ruled the "Blade Runner" was not a flight risk and did not pose a danger to society after an emotionally charged four-day bail hearing that transfixed South Africa and the world.

"I come to the conclusion that the accused has made a case to be released on bail," Nair said to cries of "yes!" from Pistorius's supporters in court.

Pistorius later left the magistrate's court in a silver sports

utility vehicle flanked by photographers and cameramen on motorbikes.

It was a first victory in what is expected to be a long legal battle with the state, which accuses Pistorius of premeditated murder.

Bail was set at one million rand (\$112,770) and Pistorius will have to surrender his passport, firearms and report to Pretoria's Brooklyn police between 7:00 am and 1:00 pm on Monday and Friday.

As the two-hour ruling was read, the 26-year-old stood in the dock weeping and quivering as his family looked on, riven with tension.

Following the magistrate's decision, Pistorius was es-

corted to the holding area sobbing uncontrollably, as his brother Carl hugged sister Aimee and the broader family huddled in prayer.

"We are relieved by the fact that Oscar got bail today, but at the same time, we are in mourning for Reeva Steenkamp and her family," said the athlete's uncle and family spokesman Arnold Pistorius.

"As a family, we know Oscar's version of what happened that night, and we know that it is the truth that will prevail in the coming court case."

Pistorius will head to a relative's house rather than return to the Pretoria estate where Steenkamp was killed.

"He doesn't want to go back to the house," said his attorney Barry Roux.

His arrest on February 14 shocked the world and gripped South Africa, where he is still considered a national hero after becoming the first double amputee to compete in the Olympics.

Pistorius spent more than a week at a Pretoria police station charged with the premeditated Valentine's Day killing of Steenkamp, a model and law graduate.

If found guilty he faces a possible life sentence.

He denies the charge, saying that he shot 29-year-old Steenkamp repeatedly through a locked bathroom door having mistaken her for a burglar.

Outside the court there were mixed reactions.

"In South Africa, as far as the law is concerned, if you are rich you are always free," said 29-year-old law student Adolph Baloyi.

Experts said the case could now be fast-tracked through the courts.

"This is probably going to get priority and will probably take about six months to go to trial," said Stephen Tuson, a criminal law professor at the University of Witwatersrand.

Despite the victory, Pistorius may have a tough task to avoid jail time.

While magistrate Nair harshly criticised the police work in the case, he said of Pistorius's account of events that "there are improbabilities that need to be explored."

Just hours before the magistrate's decision, Pistorius's lawyer appeared to admit the star sprinter could be convicted on lesser charges of homicide.

That charge, which entails negligence rather than murderous intent, could carry a sentence of up to 15 years in prison, or in some instances release and a warning.

"We can never ever say that he acted in self-defence," Roux told the court "He is exposed to be convicted of culpable homicide."

"He fired four shots, not one. He meant to kill. On his own version, he's bound to be convicted." Chief prosecutor Gerrie Nel said.

He added that Pistorius "must realise that a long term of imprisonment is almost guaranteed."

But the prosecution will be worried that its evidence was so easily picked apart by the defence.

Serious doubt was cast on the work of Hilton Botha, the detective who investigated the crime scene.

Under oath Botha admitted he may have contaminated the crime scene and appeared to undermine a neighbour's accounts of an argument between Pistorius and Steenkamp before she died.

Pistorius is due back in court on June 4 for a procedural preliminary appearance.

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